

TRANSCOMSM

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Ms. Magalie Roman Salas
Secretary, Federal Communications Commission
Portals II
445 12th Street SW
Suite TW-A325
Washington, DC 20554

Reference: File No. NSD-L-99, and
CC Docket No. 92-105

Dear Ms. Roman Salas:

I want to express TRANSCOM's support for the petition filed by the US Department of Transportation to assign a national, three-digit telephone number for traffic and traveler information services. TRANSCOM believes there is a demonstrated, compelling need for a nationwide, abbreviated dialing code. TRANSCOM further believes that meeting this need will serve the nation's population, as well as visitors to our country, including the millions that visit our region every year. State and local jurisdictions should retain authority over implementation in terms of funding, form of infrastructure, scope of services and institutional relationships to reflect the local needs and abilities.

TRANSCOM is the coalition of 15 transportation and public safety agencies in the Connecticut/ New Jersey/New York metropolitan region that provides a cooperative, coordinated approach to regional transportation management. TRANSCOM improves safety, mobility, and reliability for the traveling public by providing regional incident management and regional construction coordination, as well as by serving as a resource for multi-agency implementation of intelligent transportation systems, including advanced traveler information systems.

The USDOT petition addresses a clear public need. Miles traveled continues to increase while system capacity has not kept pace. The resulting congestion costs our region \$10 billion annually in delay costs, much of that due to incidents. This is one of the major reasons why we created TRANSCOM in 1986 and why we continue to invest heavily in transportation management, including traveler information systems.

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Already, using separate telephone numbers, our members receive about 20 million calls annually. Nationwide N11 would significantly enhance our ability to serve the public in this manner. TRANSCOM represents its member agencies as the government lead in the public/private partnership that is implementing the USDOT funded *iTravel*, Model Deployment Initiative. *iTravel* will provide travel information to the public 24 hours a day, seven days a week through a variety of media including several regional telephone lines, to facilitate more informed travel choices. It will provide real-time information (such as traffic and transit incidents, construction, and actual roadway travel times) and it will provide regional transit trip planning. Nationwide N11 would strengthen innovative partnerships such as *iTravel*.

One of the most significant barriers to widespread access to the use of traveler information services is the lack of a uniform, easy to remember telephone number. People traveling within a region as large as ours need to rely on a growing number of telephone numbers to gain access to the information to facilitate their trip. An added complication is the proliferation of area codes and service providers. Studies show that those who obtain the information use it. Using the information creates substantial public as well as private benefits such as enhanced safety, reduced congestion and pollution, lower fuel consumption, improved traffic management, and expanded travel options for the public. Another major benefit is the ability of each of our member agencies to provide information on safe travel routes and means to evacuation sites in the event of an impending natural disaster. A single, abbreviated dialing code for both fixed and mobile inquires would eliminate the barriers to realizing these significant benefits.

The TRANSCOM region is the largest and one of the most congested regions in the country. We know that one of the most cost-effective ways to improve safety and mobility in our region is through enhanced traveler information. Approval of the USDOT petition will significantly enhance our capability serve our customers and to improve our transportation network. We urge the Federal Communications Commission to approve the petition.

Sincerely,


 Michael C. Ascher, P.E.
Chairman

Copies to: A. McCloud, FCC; TRANSCOM Board of Trustees;
TRANSCOM Technology and Operations Committee